

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 AS-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-13
JUSE-00 NSAE-00 SNM-02 TRSE-00 USIA-06 NSC-05
OES-07 OMB-01 AGRE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 L-03
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07
FRB-03 XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04 EPG-02 SIL-01 ACDA-07
/123 W

-----180634Z 128054 /15

R 170831Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3665

INFO CINCPAC

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

DEA BANGKOK

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL MANDALAY

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 RANGOON 1739

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, PDIP, EAGR, SNAR

SUBJ: JOINT WEEKA #23, JUNE 11-17

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1. NE WIN'S SON SENTENCED TO FIVE YEARS (LOU)

NGWE SOE, SON OF PRESIDENT NE WIN, AND HIS WIFE WERE

SENTENCED LAST WEEK TO TERMS AT RANGOON'S PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL IN DRUG-RELATED CHARGES. NGWE SOE RECEIVED FIVE YEARS UNDER SECTION 6-B OF THE PENAL CODE (POSSESSION AND TRAFFICKING) AND HIS WIFE RECEIVED SIX MONTHS UNDER SECTION 14-D (UNREGISTERED DRUG ADDICT). NO ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ARREST OR SENTENCING WAS MADE IN THE LOCAL PRESS.

2. GUB ENDS SUCCESSFUL NARCOTICS EXHIBIT (UNC)

MORE THAN 100,000 PERSONS VISITED AN EXHIBIT OF 124 POSTERS ON THE DANGERS OF DRUG ABUSE. THE TEN-DAY EXHIBIT WAS ORGANIZED BY THE PABEDAN TOWNSHIP (RANGOON) AND HELD IN THE ART COUNCIL GALLERY. BOTATAUNG TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS, RECOGNIZING AN EFFECTIVE PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN, ANNOUNCED THEY WILL SPONSOR A POSTER AND CARTOON EXHIBIT ON PUBLIC LAW AND ORDER.

3. BATTLES WITH BCP (CONF)

ACCORDING TO SEVERAL SENIOR BURMESE MILITARY OFFICERS, BURMA ARMY FORCES ARE ENGAGED IN A SERIES OF BATTLES WITH A BCP FORCE ESTIMATED BY THEM TO BE ABOUT 700-800 STRONG. THE BATTLES ARE TAKING PLACE IN NORTHERN SHAN STATE WEST OF THE SALWEEN RIVER, NORTH OF THE TAUNGGYI-KENTUNG ROAD AND SOUTHEAST OF TANGYAN. ADDITIONAL BURMA ARMY UNITS HAVE BEEN REPORTED MOVING INTO THE AREA. DETAILS OF THE SITUATION ARE NOT AVAILABLE.

COMMENT: IT APPEARS THAT BCP UNITS MAY BE ATTEMPTING TO CROSS THE SALWEEN RIVER IN STRENGTH IN WHAT COULD BE A MAJOR OPERATION (UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES) TO COINCIDE WITH THE ONSET OF THE RAINY SEASON.

4. WEAK MONSOON COULD DAMAGE PADDY CROP (UNC)

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GUB MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTS WARNED PADDY FARMERS THAT THE MONSOON RAINS WHICH ARRIVED RATHER LATE THIS YEAR ARE EXPECTED TO REMAIN RELATIVELY WEAK AT LEAST UNTIL JULY. IT CLAIMED RAINFALL IN MANY AREAS HAS BEEN LESS THAN NORMAL. FARMERS WERE URGED TO DEVISE MEANS TO CULTIVATE PADDY NURSERIES WITHOUT DEPENDING ON RAIN WATER. AT THE SAME TIME THE MINISTRY WARNED THAT HEAVY RAINS IN NORTHERN BURMA COULD LEAD TO FLOOD CONDITIONS DOWNSTREAM. HOWEVER, IT NOTED THAT PRESENT CONDITIONS SEEM QUITE FAVORABLE FOR CULTIVATION OF JUTE AND COTTO.

COMMENT: ALTHOUGH SOME AREAS OF BURMA MAY HAVE EXPERIENCED LESS RAINFALL THAN NORMAL THIS YEAR (THROUGH MID-JUNE RANGOON'S RAINFALL IS ONLY ABOUT HALF OF WHAT IT WAS AT THE SAME TIME LAST YEAR), REPORTS FROM MOST MAJOR PADDY GROWING AREAS INDICATE THE MOISTURE HAS BEEN MORE THAN SUFFICIENT FOR PADDY FARMERS TO BEGIN FIELD PREPARATIONS FOR THIS YEAR'S CROP. THE MINISTRY'S ANNOUNCEMENT FOLLOWED RELEASE OF SOME REVISED FIGURES ON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION WHICH SHOWED THAT THE AVERAGE YEARLY INCREASE IN AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT OVER THE PAST

THREE YEARS WAS ONLY 2.8 PERCENT, FAR SHORT OF THE TARGET OF 4 PERCENT A YEAR PRESCRIBED BY THE 20-YEAR PLAN. THE MINISTRY ISSUED A TARGET CALLING FOR A 6.8 PERCENT INCREASE THIS YEAR TO MAKE UP FOR THE SHORTFALL. THE WARNING ON ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS, THEREFORE, MAY MERELY BE AN ATTEMPT BY THE MINISTRY TO PLACE AN EXCUSE ON RECORD SHOULD THIS YEAR'S TARGET FAIL TO BE ATTAINED.

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5. GUB TRADE DELEGATION VISITS MALAYSIA (UNC)

A FIVE-MEMBER TRADE DELEGATION LED BY U KHIN MAUNG, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE MYANMA EXPORT IMPORT CORPORATION, DEPARTED FOR KUALA LUMPUR ON JUNE 13. THE DELEGATION WILL NEGOTIATE ADDITIONAL BURMESE PURCHASES OF MALAYSIAN PALM OIL AND DISCUSS SALES OF BURMESE RICE TO MALAYSIA.

COMMENT: EARLIER THIS YEAR BURMA IMPORTED 1,050 TONS OF PALM OIL FROM MALAYSIA, THE FIRST SIGNIFICANT BURMESE IMPORTS OF

EDIBLE OIL IN OVER A DECADE. THESE IMPORTS SERVED TO STABILIZE
PRICES FOR THE COMMODITY. THIS CONTINUED EFFORT TO IMPORT EDIBLE
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OIL INDICATES THE GUB HAS ABANDONED, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING,
ITS ATTEMPT TO MAKE BURMA SELF-SUFFICIENT IN THIS AREA BY GOVERN-
MENT FIAT. IF THIS ATTITUDE IS EXTENDED TO OTHER COMMODITIES,
IT WOULD REPRESENT AN ECONOMIC REFORM FOR BURMA WHICH IS MORE
SIGNIFICANT THAN THOSE THE GUB HAS SO FAR COMMITTED TO WRITING.

6. U THEIN HAN RESIGNS (LOU)

THE COUNCIL OF STATE JUNE 11 ISSUED AN ANNOUNCEMENT THAT
DEPUTY MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE U THEIN HAN HAD BEEN "PERMITTED
TO RESIGN." HIS DISGRACE WAS MADE COMPLETE LATER IN THE WEEK
WHEN HE WAS ALSO PERMITTED TO RESIGN FROM HIS SEAT IN THE
HLUTTAW (PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY).

COMMENT: THE RESIGNATION STEMS FROM AN EPISODE WHICH
OCCURRED IN HONG KONG EARLIER THIS YEAR (WEEKA #18, ITEM 2).
U THEIN HAN REPORTEDLY APPEALED HIS DISMISSAL WHICH WAS
ORDERED ON HIS RETURN TO BURMA; THE APPEAL HAS EVIDENTLY
BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL.

7. ECONOMIC COORDINATION COMMITTEE FORMED (UNC)

THE GUB COUNCIL OF MINISTERS RECENTLY FORMED AN ECONOMIC
COORDINATION COMMITTEE TO OVERSEE DRAFTING OF DEVELOPMENT
PLANS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS. THE PRIME
MINISTER SERVES AS CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE AND MEMBERS INCLUDE
THE MINISTERS FOR AGRICULTURE AND FORESTS, PLANNING AND FINANCE,
CONSTRUCTION, INDUSTRY 1 AND 2, TRADE, TRANSPORT, MINES AND
LABOR. THIS COMMITTEE REPLACES THE FORMER ECONOMIC COMMITTEE
OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. ITS DUTIES REMAIN MUCH THE SAME
AS THE PREVIOUS COMMITTEE EXCEPT THAT IT LACKS THE POWER TO
APPROVE FOREIGN EXCHANGE SPENDING OF GUB DEPARTMENTS AND
AGENCIES. THIS EXCEPTION MAY GIVE THE VARIOUS GOVERNMENT
AGENCIES AND ENTERPRISES GREATER AUTONOMY IN FOREIGN EXCHANGE
TRANSACTIONS.

8. NEW ZEALAND AMBASSADOR PRESENTS CREDENTIALS (UNC)

NEW ZEALAND AMBASSADOR, MR. JACK SHEPHERD, PRESENTED HIS
LETTERS OF CREDENCE TO PRESIDENT NE WIN ON JUNE 15. THE NEW
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ZEALAND AMBASSADOR IS RESIDENT IN KUALA LUMPUR.

9. NARCOTICS - ARRESTS AND SEIZURES (UNC)

NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS HIGHLIGHTED THE ARREST OF EIGHT ADDICTS,

SIX IN RANGOON AND TWO IN MANDALAY, WHO WERE APPREHENDED FOR POSSESSION OR USE OF NARCOTICS. POLICE SEIZED SMALL AMOUNTS OF NARCOTICS AND SYRINGES. RAILWAY POLICE IN LASHIO ARRESTED ONE PERSON WHO WAS FOUND TO BE CONCEALING 20 KILOGRAMS ON THE TRAIN TO MANDALAY.

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